

March 2003

Interstate 8/Imperial Avenue Interchange

OVERALL GOALS

- Provide access from Imperial Avenue to existing and future development south Interstate 8 (I-8) and eliminate the current circuitous route and out of direction travel on city streets and county roads.
- Improve traffic safety and the operational deficiencies associated with the existing interchange.
- Reduce traffic congestion at Imperial Avenue and 4th Street interchanges on I-8 in the City of El Centro.

PROJECT MAP

THE PROJECT

The project will reconstruct the interchange at Imperial Avenue and I-8. Currently there is no access on I-8 to the southern sections of Imperial Avenue. The reconstruction project will also install two ramps that will provide direct access to the southern sections of Imperial Avenue from I-8. The proposed interchange improvement is one of the most highly anticipated projects for Imperial County.

TRAFFIC

Traffic in the project area is primarily associated with interregional traffic on I-8 and traffic onto and from Imperial Avenue north of I-8. The Imperial Avenue interchange experiences congestion in the morning and afternoon hours. Today approximately 16,000 to 27,000 vehicles per day use this section on I-8. By 2025, traffic on this portion of I-8 is projected to almost double between 31,000 and 48,000 vehicles per day.

FUNDING

The current alternatives under study range from \$22 million to \$26 million (in 2004 dollars) including all capital, support, and right-of-way costs. The project has received \$750,000 in federal and local funds for work on the environmental studies and an additional \$6.3 million has been allocated from the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to complete design, and right of way acquisition. Currently this project has a funding shortfall of \$16.4 million.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

The project is currently in the Project Report/Environmental Document Phase. It is anticipated that an Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and an initial study Negative Declaration under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will need to be processed.

SCHEDULE

Work on preliminary environmental studies for phase of the project was started in October 2000 and the environmental document is anticipated to be complete by Fall 2003. The design and right of way acquisition is anticipated to be completed by early 2005. Contingent on funding for the remaining cost shortfall, construction would be complete by the year 2006.